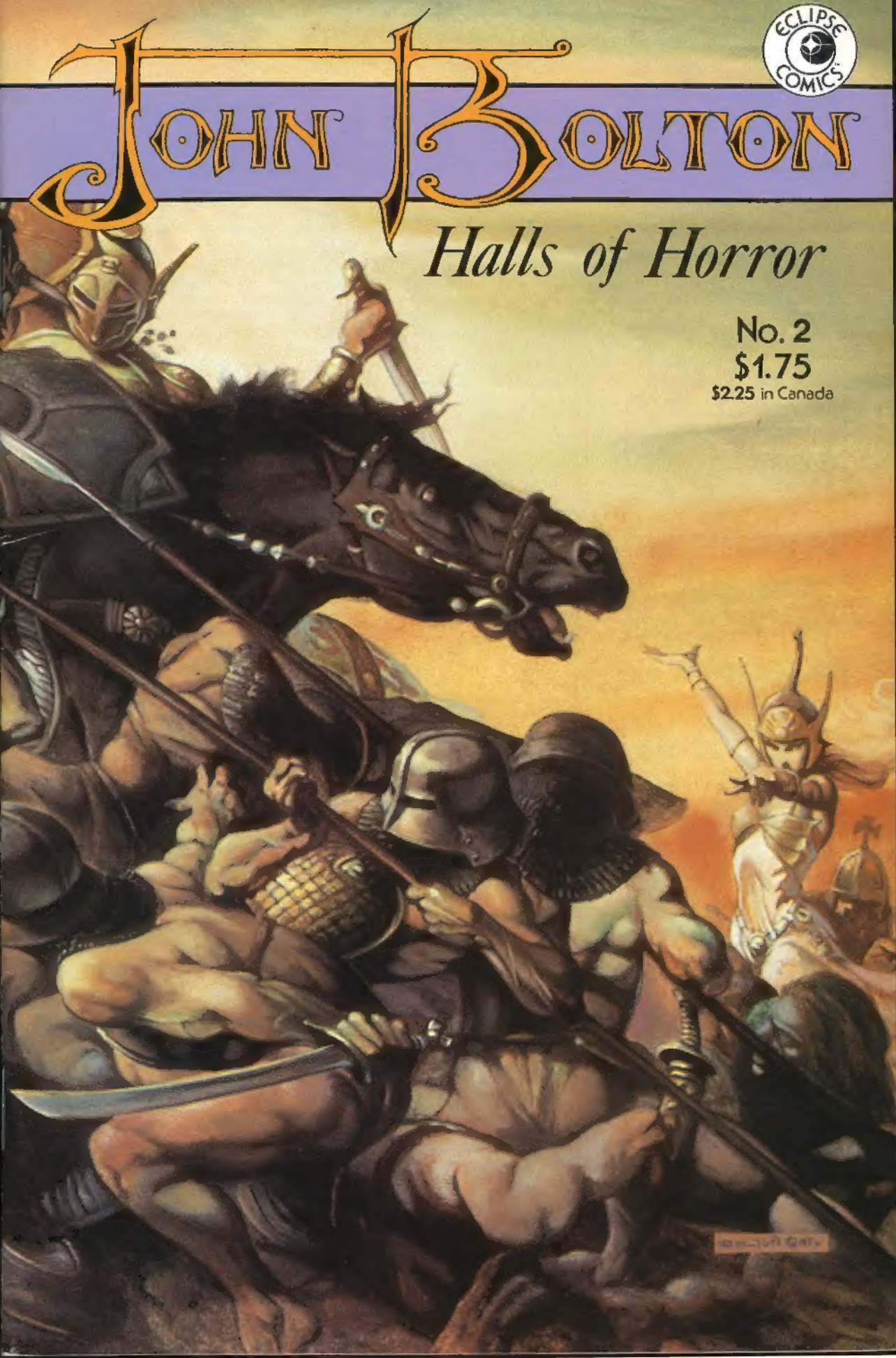
ECLIPSE COMICS
JOHN BOLTON
Halls of Horror
No. 2
$1.75
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The PENUMBRA

ECLIPSE COMICS • P. O. BOX 199 • GUERNEVILLE, CALIFORNIA 95446

ON THE RACKS

ALIEN ENCOUNTERS no. 1: Great art! Great stories! Great Science Fiction! With a fabulous cover painting by Joe Chiodo, this is the replacement for Alien Worlds. A must!

AZTEC ACE 14
Assassination attempts in ancient Rome, Dark Boys stashed amongst the Corinthian columns, Puer Artemis in slave chains, and Cleopatra peels a grape!

CROSSFIRE 12
Dave Stevens joins the team with an incredible cover featuring "The 24th Annual Death of Marilyn Monroe." A mystery you'll never forget.

JOHN BOLTON's "Halls of Horror" 1
Part 1 of 2 containing short stories illustrated by Bolton never before seen in the U.S. All with a wraparound cover painting.

DNAgents 23
"The Detonator" introduces a new villain with a novel approach to problems: whatever it is, he blows it up! Plus, a tale of Sham's past called "Baby Face."

AXA IN COLOR
In her first color graphic novel, Axa wields her sword to find a better world a hundred years in the future. Romero's paintings throughout.

THE MASKED MAN 4
"The Letter" is another winner from B.C. Boyer. The Masked Man's growing fame brings him a fan letter from a mysterious woman . . . and Maggie Brown is jealous!

THE FIESTA CAFE

I've always wanted to live in a diner. Not a fast food joint, mind you, but a regular old-fashioned diner, with a neon sign out front and a row of chrome-footed stools along the counter. The kind of place with dark green vinyl booths and a Seeburg jukebox, and checkered linoleum tile floors. The kind of place where a middle-aged waitress named Lucille calls out your order for a grilled cheese sandwich to a middle-aged cook named Joe and nobody asks if Lucille and Joe are married to each other 'cause it doesn't matter much after all these years.

I have always wanted to live in a diner for a number of reasons. I like the way people ask what kinds of pies they have today in a diner, for instance, and i like the way old men say hello to other old men in a diner. I don't like to cook, and if i lived in a diner, i could ask for lots of tomato juice and i wouldn't even mind paying for it by the glass.

There would be a coin operated "Ask Swami" machine (the kind that doubles as a menu holder) and i could get my fortune read for a penny if i lived in a diner. I could always have blue cheese dressing on my salad if i lived in a diner. And at dusk, when they turned the neon sign on, i could watch it flash and glow

FIESTA CAFE
GOOD FOOD if i lived in a diner.

It's dusk right now as i write this, and we are in our new offices, in the old train station overlooking Main Street in Guerneville, California. I'm not in a diner but i think i am, because today we put in our very own neon sign. It hangs in the window above me and to the right. It glows redly, in cursive script:

COMICS

This is a kind of heaven to me, to have a neon sign. No, we didn't "need" it — this isn't a retail store and we don't try to attract passersby to see us work. I dunno. We just wanted it, that's all. And tomorrow we'll be picking up our second neon sign, the one that has our logo on it in red and yellow and green. And after that, John Wilcox, a colourist who lives in Connecticut, will send me one of his famous cheesecakes by Federal Express (he promised to!) and Dean will make some coffee and Sean will find some plates and forks in the back room and maybe Tom Yeates will drop by on his way from Jenner to Santa Rosa. . . and for one moment we will be here, in a diner that doesn't exist outside my mind, forever.

catherine yronwode

IN YOUR HANDS

This is the second part of a two-issue Micro-Series featuring the art of John Bolton. None of these macabre stories has ever before appeared in colour or in the U.S.A. Most of them were originally printed in a b&w edition limited to 1,000 copies. If you missed Part One, ask your dealer — it went on sale only two weeks ago and should still be available.

JOHN BOLTON'S HALLS OF HORROR no. 2, June 1985. Published by Eclipse Comics, P. O. Box 199, Guerneville, CA 95446. Catherine Yronwode, Editor-In-Chief, Dean Mullaney, Publisher, Dez Skinn, Editor. All material © 1985 John Bolton, Quality Communications and the respective contributors. All rights reserved. The stories, characters, events and places in this magazine are entirely fictional. Film by SM Graphics. Printed in Canada.

NOT EVERY MONSTER MANKIND FEARS IS SPAWNED IN HELL OR BORN OF HUMAN SEED GONE BAD!...IN DAYS GONE BY, WHEN DANGER REIGNED, MEN WALKED IN FEAR...
...WHERE MONSTERS ROAMED!
ONE MILLION YEARS B.C. AN UNGUESSABLE PAST, LONG BEFORE THE DAWN OF HISTORY, WHEN MAN-THE-HUNTER AS OFTEN AS NOT FOUND HIMSELF MAN-THE-HUNTED...
ARMED WITH LITTLE MORE THAN HIS MUSCLES...AND HIS BRAIN...
A BRAIN KNOWN FOR ITS CUNNING TRICKERY EVEN THEN...

SCRIPT: STEVE MOORE ART: JOHN BOLTON COLORS: TIM SMITH

THE ROCK TRIBE GATHERS ROUND ITS TRAPPED BUT STILL DEADLY PREY, LED BY AKHOBA, THEIR AGEING CHIEF... AND HIS TWO SONS, SAKANA AND TUMAK...
AND IT IS TO TUMAK THAT THE TASK OF THE KILL GOES...
...AND THIS HONOUR!
AN HONOUR SAKANA FEELS SHOULD RIGHTLY HAVE BEEN HIS...
BUT THERE ARE MANY THINGS SAKANA FEELS SHOULD BE HIS...
INCLUDING NUPONDI, TUMAK'S MATE
TO AKHOBA, AS CHIEF, GOES THE FIRST AND CHOICEST MEAT... TO TUMAK AS KILLER, THE SECOND
TO THE OTHERS, THE REMAINS ARE LEFT TO FIGHT OVER... IN MINUTES, EVEN THE BONES WILL HAVE BEEN SUCKED DRY OF MARROW
BUT, LIKE MANY OF HIS TRIBE, AKHOBA IS STILL HUNGRY THIS NIGHT... AND IT IS TUMAK WHO STILL HAS MEAT AFTER HE HAS FINISHED HIS OWN
AND TUMAK IS NOT ONE TO BE HONOURED AND DISHONOURED IN THE SAME DAY!

TUMAK'S VOCABULARY IS LIMITED BUT HIS ACTIONS SPEAK FOR THEMSELVES
GNARR
BUT IN TRYING TO SAVE HIS MEAT, TUMAK HAS BITTEN OFF MORE THAN HE CAN CHEW... AKHOBA WILL NOT HAVE HIS LEADERSHIP THREATENED BY ANYONE...
EVEN HIS SON...
LIFE IS CRUEL AMONG THE ROCK PEOPLE... DEATH NOTHING MORE THAN SOMETHING TO BE WATCHED AND FORGOTTEN...
UNLESS IT IS THE DEATH OF A MATE... OR A HATED ENEMY
BUT MATES CAN BE REPLACED... AND SAKANA'S TRIUMPH IS COMPLETE
THE GODS HAVE NOT YET BEEN INVENTED, SO THEY CANNOT SMILE ON TUMAK. NONETHELESS, HE SURVIVES... HIS FALL BROKEN BY THE SOFT SAND AT THE FOOT OF THE CLIFF...
TUMAK KNOWS DEATH IS INEVITABLE IF HE RETURNS TO HIS OWN PEOPLE... AND ALMOST AS INEVITABLE IF HE LEAVES THEM... BUT THERE IS NO OTHER CHOICE...

AND, ALONE, TUMAK REALISES HOW DEFENCELESS, HOW SMALL A MAN IS... FOR IN THIS VAST WILDERNESS, VAST CREATURES STILL RULE...

A SHEER MOUNTAIN RANGE PROVIDES PROTECTION FROM THE BEASTS... BUT DOES NOTHING TO RELIEVE TUMAK'S THIRST, HUNGER... OR WEARINESS...

TUMAK LONG AGO LEFT THE KNOWN WORLD... THE TUNNEL BEFORE HIM NOW COULD LEAD TO NEW LIFE... OR DEATH. THERE IS ONLY ONE WAY TO FIND OUT...

WITH GREAT RELIEF, TUMAK REACHES OPEN AIR ONCE MORE. NEW RUGGED VISTAS SPREAD BEFORE HIM, AND SOMETHING TOTALLY UNKNOWN TO THE ROCK TRIBE... THE SEA...

THAT VISION OF THE VAST WATERS DRIVES TUMAK ON... PAST THE LIMITS OF ENDURANCE...

BUT JUST WHEN HIS GOAL IS AT LAST IN SIGHT, TUMAK'S EYES CLOSE ...AND HE SEES ONLY BLACKNESS...

BUT OTHER EYES ARE STILL OPEN... EYES OF THE SHELL PEOPLE, DWELLERS BY THE SHORE...

THE GIRL'S NAME IS LOANA, AND SHE HAS NEVER SEEN A DARK HAIRED STRANGER LIKE TUMAK BEFORE. HE MAY BE DANGEROUS... BUT SHE WAKES HIM ANYWAY.

HOWEVER, TUMAK IS NOT THE ONLY INTRUDER ON THIS BEACH...
EEEIIEE!
WUHUUUUUU!!
THEN...
SOMETHING, SOME PRIMITIVE EMOTION, MAKES LOANA UNWILLING TO LEAVE THE STRANGER. HER COMPANIONS, HOWEVER, HAVE NO SUCH SCRUPLES...
THE WARRIORS OF THE SHELL PEOPLE ARE BRAVE, MOVING IN CLOSE TO ATTACK...
TOO CLOSE...
AAIIAUUUGH!
BUT UNLIKE AKHOBA, CHIEF LEADER OF THE SHELL PEOPLE, CARES FOR HIS WARRIORS AND MOVES IN TO THE RESCUE
AND FINALLY, ROBBED OF ITS EASY PREY AND STUNG BY THE WARRIOR'S SPEARS, THE GIANT TURTLE TURNS...
AND FINALLY RETURNS TO THE DEEP, SPARKLING SEA...
TUMAK IS STILL TOO WEARY TO TAKE IN WHAT HAS HAPPENED TO HIM... BUT HE DOES SEE THAT HE HAS ENTERED A STRANGE NEW WORLD...
A WORLD WHERE LIFE IS VERY DIFFERENT...

BUT FARAWAY, LIFE CONTINUES MUCH THE SAME FOR THE ROCK TRIBE... WITH AKHOBA LEADING A HUNTING PARTY...
AKHOBA IS STRONG...
AND CONFIDENT... PERHAPS OVER-CONFIDENT. FOR THOSE MIGHTY THEWS ARE NO LONGER AS YOUNG AS ONCE THEY WERE...
AND WHERE ONCE A MIGHTY VICTORY CRY WOULD HAVE BURST FROM HIS THROAT, NOW ONLY A RASPED SCREAM OF DEFEAT BUBBLES FROM HIS LIPS...
AAUU-UGH
DESPERATELY, AKHOBA TRIES TO RAISE HIS SHATTERED BODY, SEEKING HELP HE KNOWS FULL-WELL WILL NOT BE FORTH-COMING...
AND AS AKHOBA FAINTS WITH PAIN, SAKANA MERELY SNEERS...
CRIPPLED, AKHOBA CAN ONLY DRAG HIMSELF BACK TO THE CAVE... A JOURNEY LASTING SEVERAL DAYS
TOO INJURED TO RULE, TOO RESPECTED TO BE KILLED, THE REST OF HIS DAYS WILL BE SPENT IN THE TORMENTED KNOWLEDGE THAT SAKANA NOW LEADS THE ROCK TRIBE
BUT AS THE DAYS PASS IN THE SHELL-PEOPLE'S VILLAGE, TUMAK FINDS MANY SURPRISES. FOR THESE VILLAGERS HAVE DEVELOPED A CRUDE TECHNOLOGY... A BASIC AGRICULTURE... AND A HAPPY COMMUNITY LIFE...
IT IS THIS LAST WHICH TUMAK FINDS MOST DIFFICULT TO UNDERSTAND. YET, WITH LOANA BY HIS SIDE, HE BEGINS TO SETTLE SLOWLY INTO THE ROUTINE...
BUT ROUTINES ARE OFTEN CRUELLY SHATTERED... AND AN ALLOSAURUS CARES LITTLE AS TO THE HAPPINESS OF ITS VICTIMS...
AIIEEE!
END PART ONE

WITHOUT A DOUBT, THIS WAS A TEMPLE IN ANCIENT TIMES BEFORE THE GREAT CONTAMINATION.
THE PEOPLE OF THE 20TH CENTURY STILL HAD FAITH IN THE SUPERNATURAL.
EVERLASTING RHETORICS ABOUT THE GOOD AND THE BAD... UNTIL THEY THEMSELVES FINALLY PUT AN END TO IT ALL.

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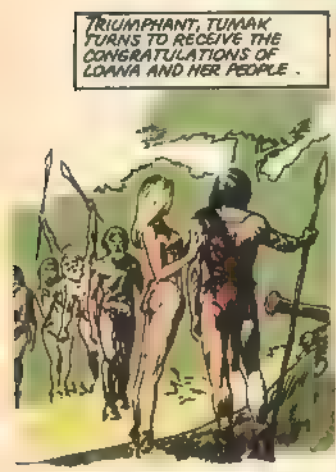
PART TWO

PANIC SPREADS LIKE WILDFIRE, AND THE VILLAGERS FLEE FOR THE PROTECTION OF THE CAVE. BUT SOME DO NOT MOVE FAST ENOUGH

DAYS BEFORE, PITY WOULD HAVE BEEN AN UNTHINKABLE EMOTION FOR TUMAK BUT NOW, HARDLY REALISING WHAT HE IS DOING, HE GRABS AHOT'S SPEAR

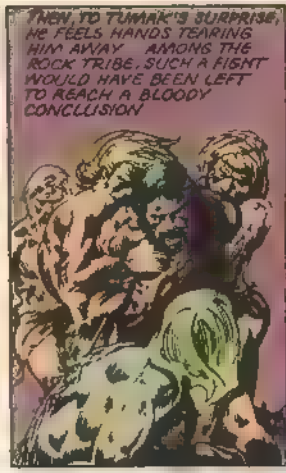
BUT THIS CANNOT LONG HOLD BACK THE FEROCIOUS CREATURE FOR EVEN IF THE HUNTERS ARE ARMED, TO THE ALLOSAURUS THEY ARE STILL ONLY MEAT!

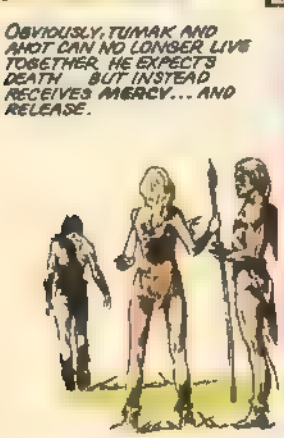
UNTIL IT IS TOO LATE. .


TRIUMPHANT, TUMAK TURNS TO RECEIVE THE CONGRATULATIONS OF LOANA AND HER PEOPLE .

BUT CONGRATULATION IS SECONDARY IN AHOT'S MIND TUMAK HAS HIS SPEAR AND HE WANTS IT BACK!

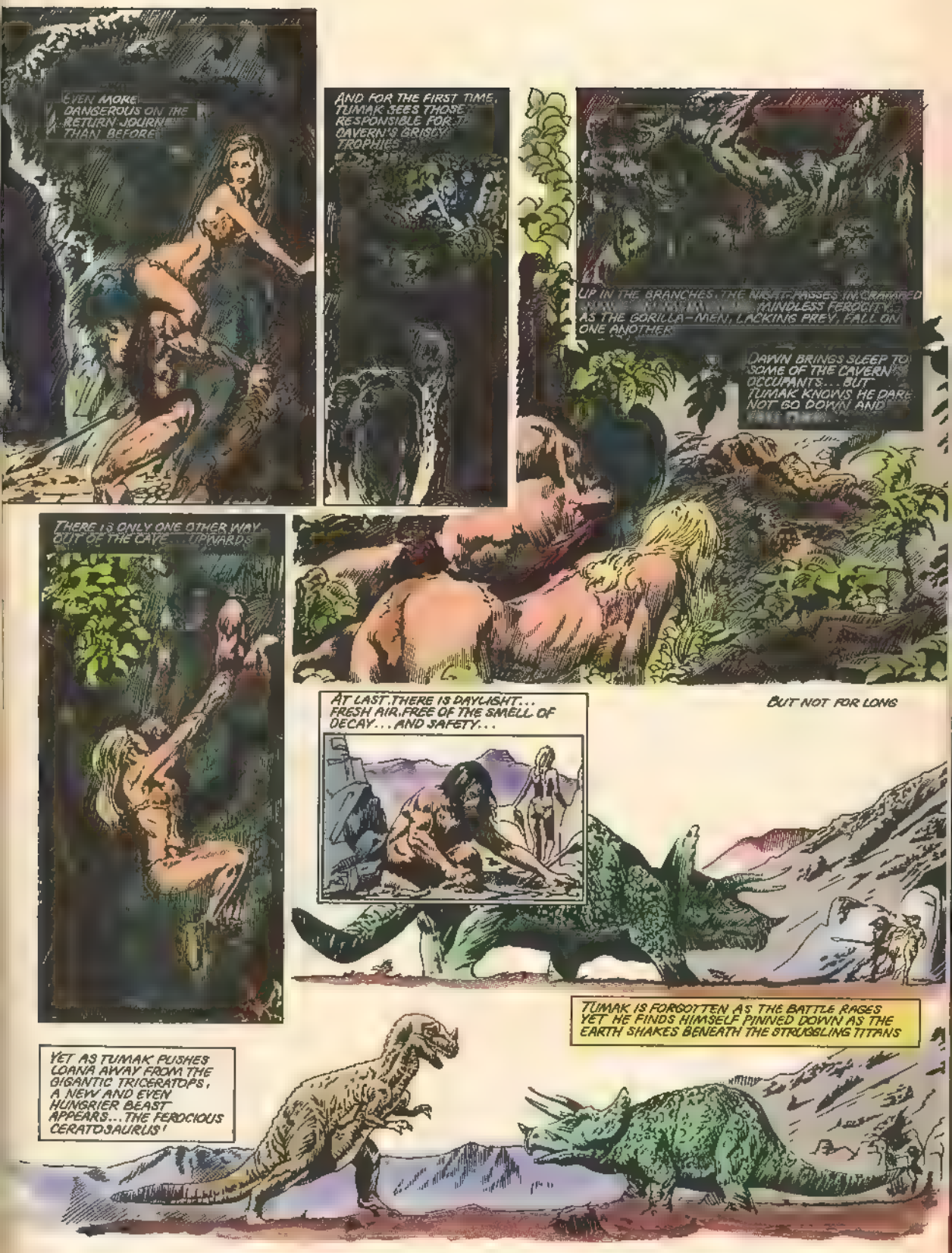
BUT...

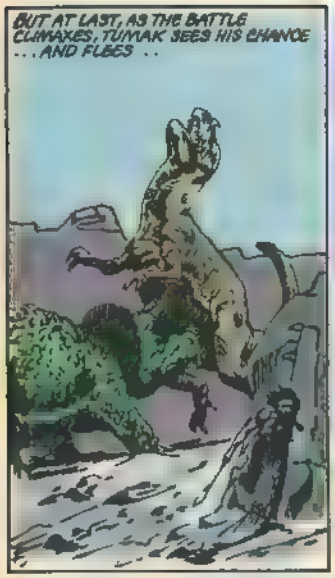

THEN, TO TUMAK'S SURPRISE, HE FEELS HANDS TEARING HIM AWAY AMONG THE ROCK TRIBE, SUCH A FIGHT WOULD HAVE BEEN LEFT TO REACH A BLOODY CONCLUSION


OBVIOUSLY, TUMAK AND AHOT CAN NO LONGER LIVE TOGETHER. HE EXPECTS DEATH BUT INSTEAD RECEIVES MERCY... AND RELEASE.

AND SO TUMAK LEAVES THE VILLAGE OF THE SHELL PEOPLE... BUT NOT ALONE...
FOR LOANA FOLLOWS .. BRINGING WITH HER ONE LAST GIFT...

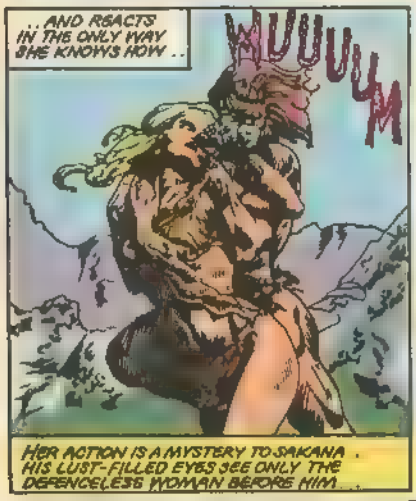
THERE IS ONLY ONE OTHER PLACE TUMAK KNOWS... HIS HOME


EVEN MORE DANGEROUS ON THE RETURN JOURNEY THAN BEFORE!
AND FOR THE FIRST TIME, TUMAK SEES THOSE RESPONSIBLE FOR TAVERN'S GRISLY TROPHIES
UP IN THE BRANCHES, THE NIGHT PASSES IN CRAVED MINDLESS FEROCITY AS THE GORILLA-MEN, LACKING PREY, FALL ON ONE ANOTHER
DAWN BRINGS SLEEP TO SOME OF THE CAVERN OCCUPANTS... BUT TUMAK KNOWS HE DARE NOT GO DOWN AND
THERE IS ONLY ONE OTHER WAY OUT OF THE CAVE... UPWARDS
AT LAST, THERE IS DAYLIGHT... FRESH AIR, FREE OF THE SMELL OF DECAY... AND SAFETY...
BUT NOT FOR LONG
TUMAK IS FORGOTTEN AS THE BATTLE RAGES YET HE FINDS HIMSELF PINNED DOWN AS THE EARTH SHAKES BENEATH THE STRUGGLING TITANS
YET AS TUMAK PUSHES LOANA AWAY FROM THE GIGANTIC TRICERATOPS, A NEW AND EVEN HUNGRIER BEAST APPEARS... THE FEROCIOUS CERATOSAURUS!


BUT AT LAST, AS THE BATTLE CLIMAXES, TUMAK SEES HIS CHANCE . . . AND FLEES . .

MEANWHILE, LOANA RUNS UNHEEDINGLY NOT REALISING SHE IS ALREADY IN THE TERRITORY OF THE ROCK TRIBE . . AND SAKANA . . .

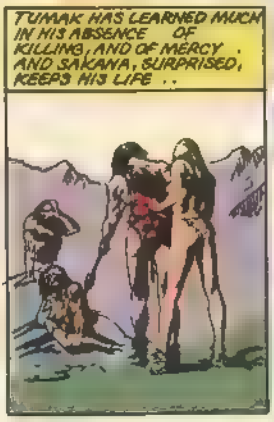
BUT SHE FINDS OUT SOON ENOUGH . . .

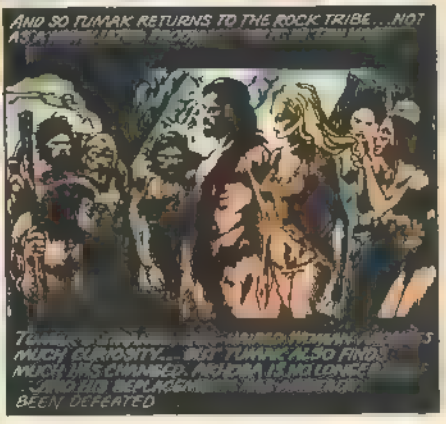

. . AND REACTS IN THE ONLY WAY SHE KNOWS HOW . .
WUUUUM
HER ACTION IS A MYSTERY TO SAKANA . HIS LUST-FILLED EYES SEE ONLY THE DEFENCELESS WOMAN BEFORE HIM . .

BUT TUMAK KNOWS WHAT THE CONCH TRUMPET SIGNIFIES . AND HE IS ANYTHING BUT DEFENCELESS .

GRARRR!

SAKANA HAS NEVER SEEN A STONE-TIPPED SPEAR BEFORE . . BUT NOW HE FEELS ITS FULL MALICE .


TUMAK HAS LEARNED MUCH IN HIS ABSENCE OF KILLING, AND OF MERCY . AND SAKANA, SURPRISED, KEEPS HIS LIFE . .


AND SO TUMAK RETURNS TO THE ROCK TRIBE . . . NOT ALSA
MUCH CURIOSITY . . BUT TUMAK ALSO FINDS MUCH HAS CHANGED . . AS DOES HIS INFLUENCE . . AND HIS REPUTATION . . .
BEEN DEFEATED

AND AS THE DAYS PASS, TUMAK IS GRUDGINGLY ACCEPTED AS THE NEW CHIEF. MASTER OF ALL HE SURVEYS — THE RUMBLING VOLCANO, THE HOT LAVA PLAIN, THE LAKE IN THE OLD CRATER

BUT TIME ALSO HEALS WOUNDS... AND AT LAST SAKANA IS TO LEAD A HUNTING PARTY ..

KNOWING FULL WELL HE WILL NOT RETURN . EXCEPT AS CONQUEROR !

WITH SAKANA BONE, TUMAK SETTLES DOWN HAPPILY TO TEACH HIS PEOPLE ALL HE HAS LEARNED . THE ART OF MAKING STONE-TIPPED SPEARS, PEACE, EVEN WASHING..!

BUT HAPPINESS IS FLEETING, EVEN IN THE BEST OF WORLDS . AND THIS IS FAR FROM THAT SUDDENLY.

AIYEEEK!

THE PTERODACTYL'S ATTACK IS SWIFT... THE NOISE OF IT'S WINGS DEAFENING . AND ITS CHOSEN VICTIM QUITE HELPLESS .

EEEEEEE!

TUMAK'S AIM IS TRUE ..BUT EVEN THEN THE WINGED MONSTER WILL NOT RELEASE ITS PREY...

FLAKKA!

FLAKKA!

EEEEEEE!

LOSING BLOOD AND SLOWED BY IT'S PREY, THE PTERODACTYL NONETHELESS CARRIES OFF ALL THAT TUMAK CARES ABOUT AND ONLY ONE OTHER WILL JOIN HIM IN THE CHASE .

FLAKKA!

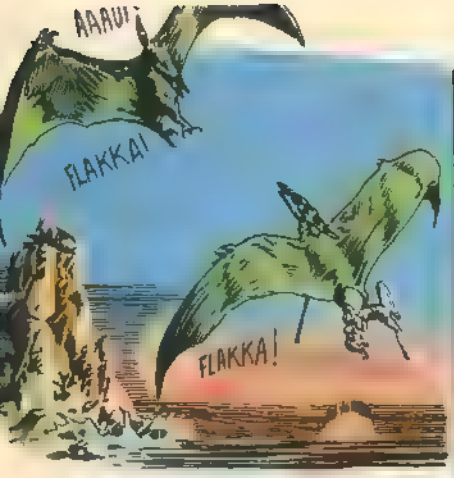
FLAKKA

AND FATE DECREES THAT EVEN HE SHALL NOT FOLLOW TUMAK FOR LONG ..

FLAKKA!

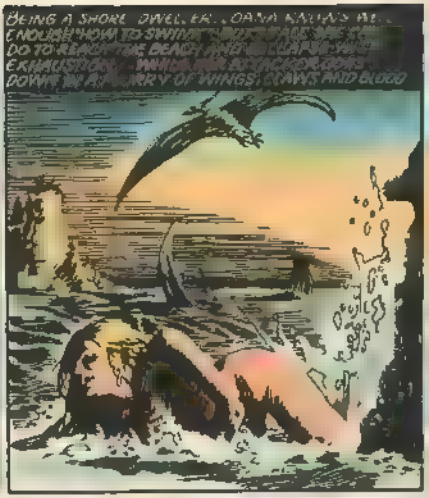
FLAKKA!

AYAAAGH!



DUSK FINDS TUMAK STILL RUNNING, BUT BY THEN HE IS TOO FAR BEHIND TO SEE QUARRY... OR WHAT OCCURS AS APPROACHES ITS NEST

THEN, AS THE FIRST PTERODACTYL FINDS ITSELF FORCED TO ENGAGE IN A LIFE AND DEATH STRUGGLE, LOANA [illegible] AND PLUNGES [illegible]



BEING A SHORE DWELLER, LOANA KNOWS HE CANNOT SWIM FAR ENOUGH TO DO SO. HE MUST REACH THE BEACH AND [illegible] EXHAUSTION. [illegible] DOWN IN A FURRY OF WINGS, CLAWS AND BLOOD

AND WHEN TUMAK COMES IN SIGHT OF THE NEST, THE SECOND PTERODACTYL IS SALVAGING, CANNIBALISING THE [illegible] FOE'S OFFSPRING

BUT TUMAK MERELY SEES PTERODACTYL FEEDING, AND CONCLUDES OBVIOUSLY LOANA IS DEAD. THERE IS NOTHING TO DO BUT FIND SHELTER FOR THE NIGHT

A NIGHT WHICH IS LONG AND DARK, HIDING [illegible] FROM [illegible] AS [illegible]

BUT EVEN HER OWN VILLAGE IS NOT HOME WITHOUT TUMAK. AND SHE PERSUADES AHOT TO ESCORT HER ON HER RETURN

AND, USING THE NEW ROUTE HER ADVENTURE HAS SHOWN HER, LOANA SOON COMES ACROSS TUMAK, SLOWED BY HIS INJURED COMPANION

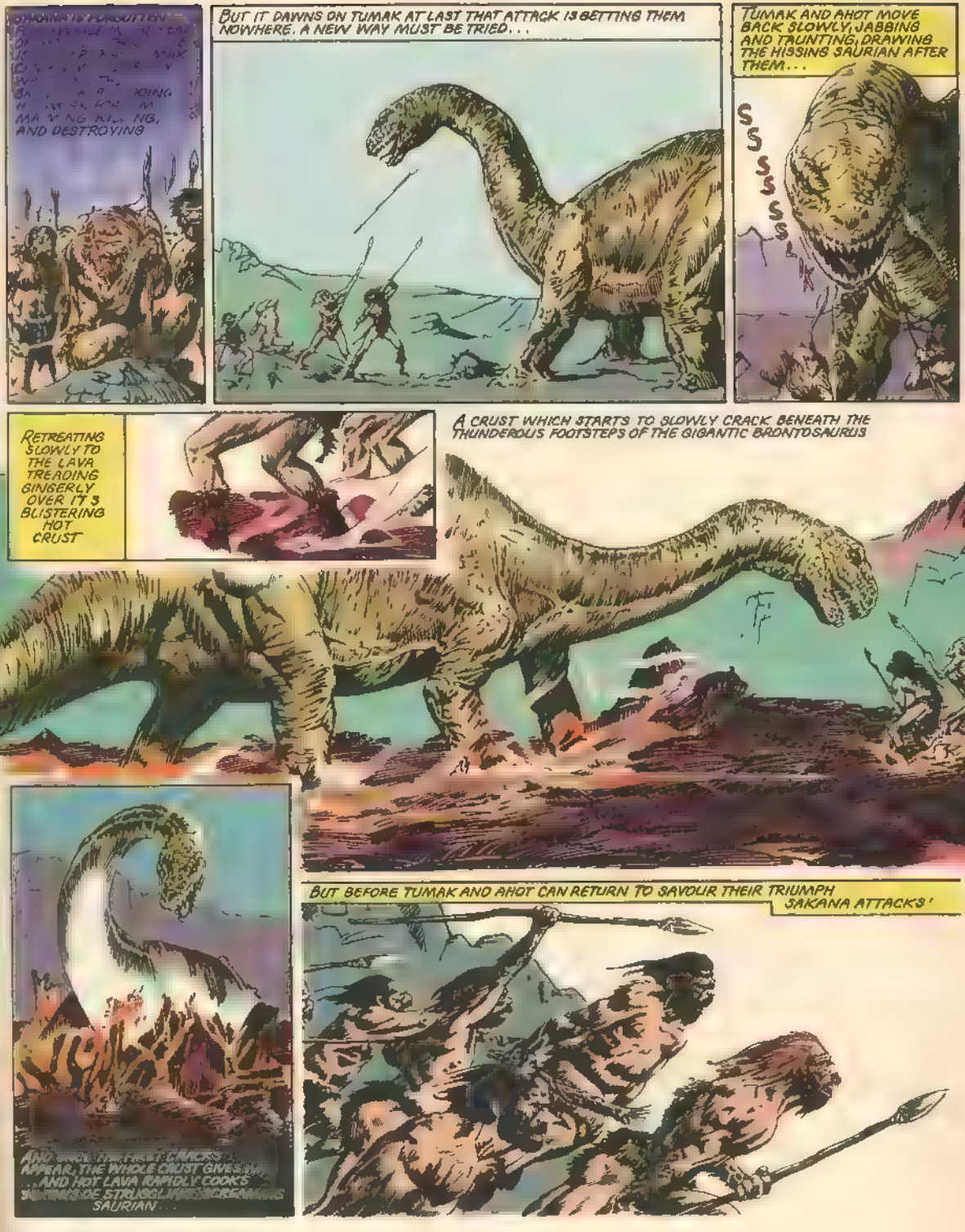
AND THE JOY OF THE REUNION MAKES EVEN TUMAK AND AHOT FORGET THEIR OLD GRUDGE

BUT OTHER GRUDGES ARE NOT FORGOTTEN. A RUNNER BRINGS NEWS FROM THE ROCK TRIBE – SAKANA IS CHIEF OF A NEW TRIBE, THREATENING THE OLD

AHOT AND HIS MEN AGREE TO RETURN WITH TUMAK... BUT THEY FIND A NEW AND MORE PRESSING DANGER WAITING

A GIGANTIC BRONTOSAURUS IS ATTACKING... AND THE DIVIDED TRIBE IS TOO WEAK TO DRIVE IT OFF.

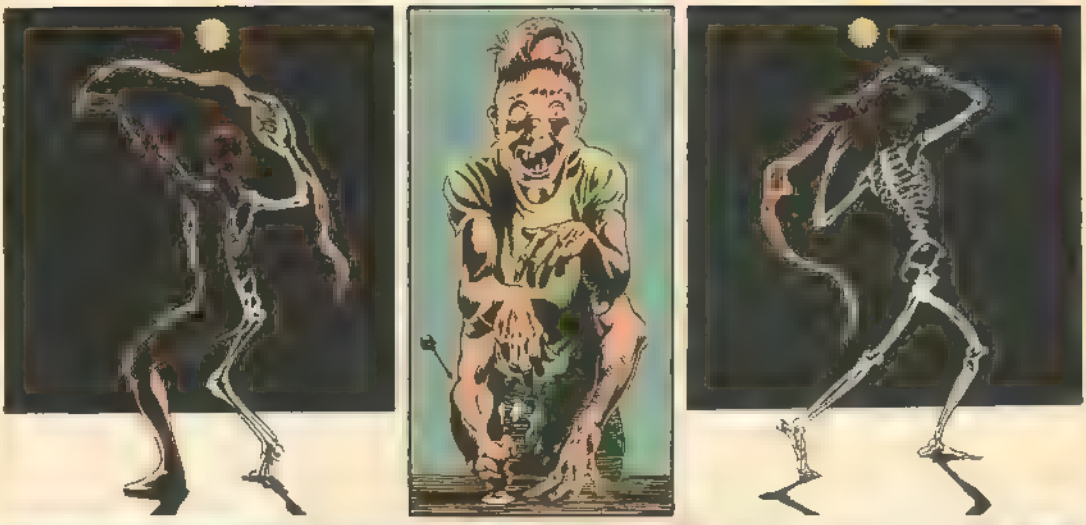
TUMAK AND HIS ALLIES ARE ALSO TOO FEW TO TROUBLE THE HUGE BEAST. BUT TUMAK IS CHIEF NOW, AND HE MUST TRY TO PROTECT HIS PEOPLE.

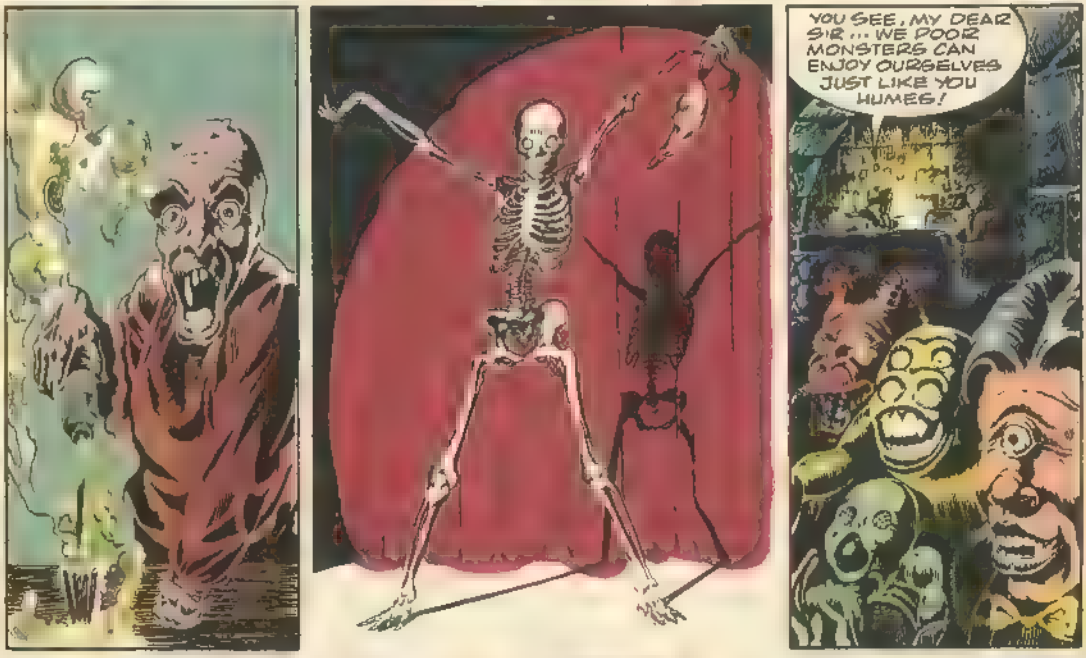

AND DESTROYING
But it dawns on Tumak at last that attack is getting them nowhere. A new way must be tried...
Tumak and Ahot move back slowly, jabbing and taunting, drawing the hissing saurian after them...
SSSS

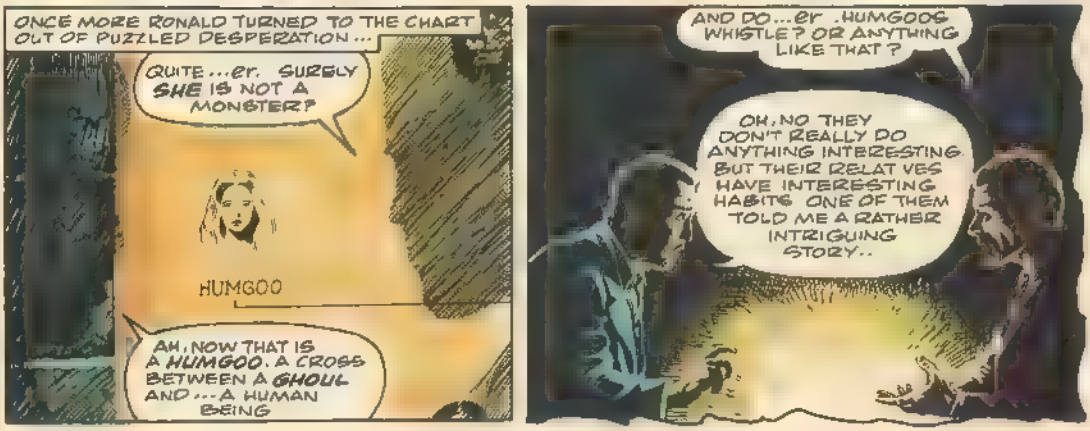
AND IF TUMAK IS NOT THERE, ALL THE BETTER. SAKANA WILL TAKE HIS WOMAN INSTEAD!
BUT TUMAK AND AHOT HAD RETURNED.
AND THAT TUMAK CANNOT
SAKANA!!

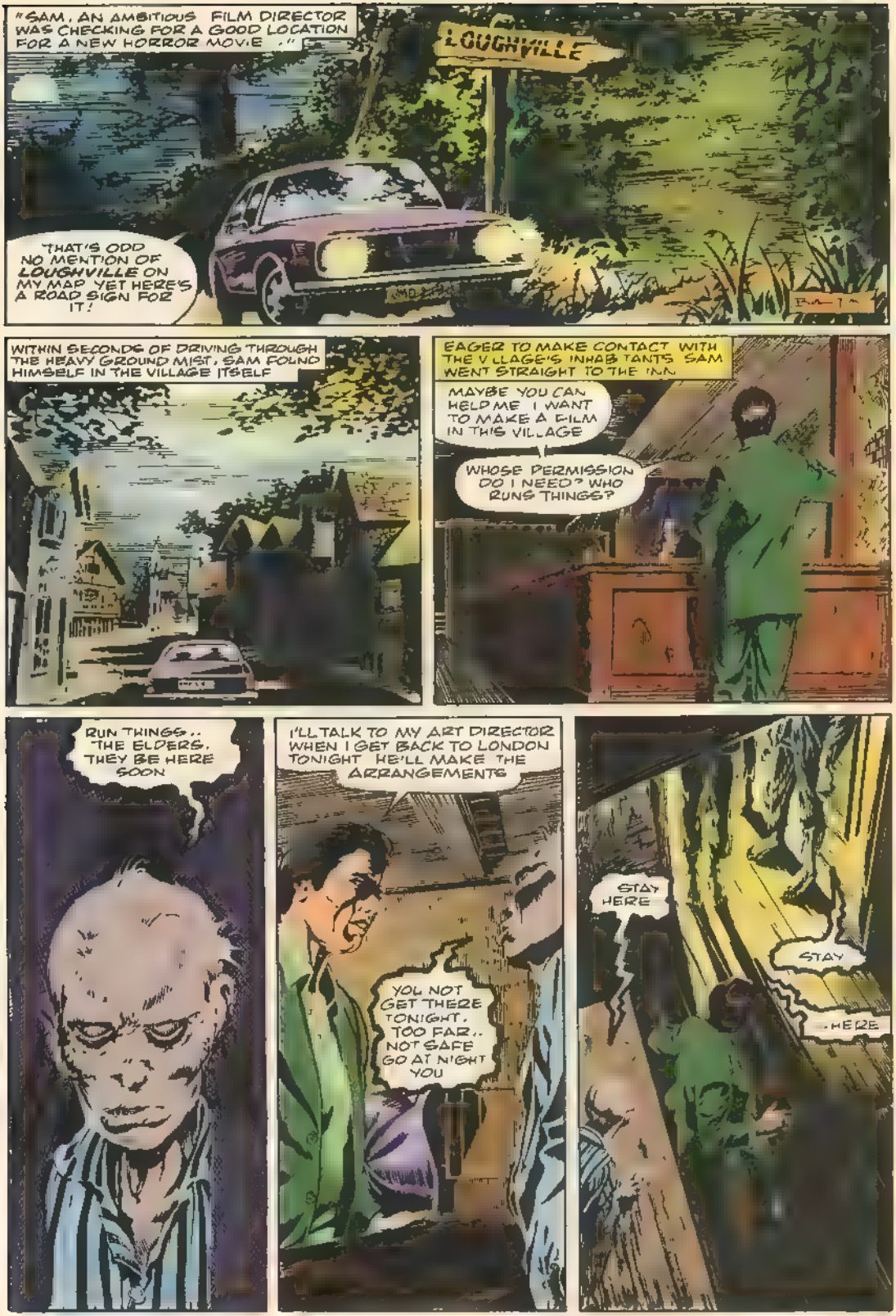
BUT THERE IS ONE THING SAKANA CANNOT TAKE: TUMAK'S WOMAN...
WHEN A SUDDEN SHATTERING ROAR HALTS THE FIGHT. LONG SMOULDERING, THE VOLCANO NOW BURSTS FORTH INTO EXPLOSIVE FURY...
EEEEK!
AAAAAAAA!
FOR OTHERS, THERE IS NO SH... NO HOPE... NO CHANCE...
BUT AT ... NATURE'S FURY SUBSIDES... THERE IS AN UNHOLY QUIET, BROKEN ONLY BY THE HOWLS OF THE DYING...
AND YET, THERE ARE SURVIVORS...
SURVIVORS WHO WILL START ANEW MARCHING INTO THE UNKNOWN MARCHING TOWARDS THE FUTURE...

THERE IS NOTHING SADDER THAN THE AGONISED GRIEF OF A TENDER HEARTED MONSTER!
THEN ERAMUS'S MEMORIES ARE CUT SHORT, AS HE AND THE ENTHRALLED AUTHOR TURN TO SEE
THE ENTERTAINMENT! IT'S ABOUT TO BEGIN!

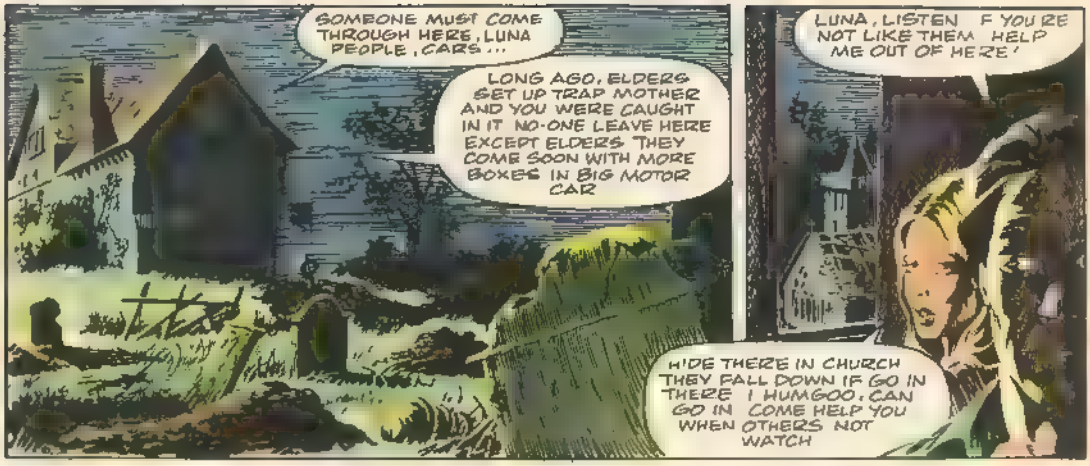



YOU SEE, MY DEAR SIR ... WE POOR MONSTERS CAN ENJOY OURSELVES JUST LIKE YOU HUMES!


ONCE MORE RONALD TURNED TO THE CHART OUT OF PUZZLED DESPERATION ...
QUITE ...er. SURELY SHE IS NOT A MONSTER?
HUMGOO
AH, NOW THAT IS A HUMGOO. A CROSS BETWEEN A GHOUL AND ... A HUMAN BEING
AND DO ...er. HUMGOOS WHISTLE? OR ANYTHING LIKE THAT?
OH, NO THEY DON'T REALLY DO ANYTHING INTERESTING BUT THEIR RELATIVES HAVE INTERESTING HABITS ONE OF THEM TOLD ME A RATHER INTRIGUING STORY..


"SAM, AN AMBITIOUS FILM DIRECTOR WAS CHECKING FOR A GOOD LOCATION FOR A NEW HORROR MOVIE ."
LOUGHVILLE
THAT'S ODD NO MENTION OF LOUGHVILLE ON MY MAP YET HERE'S A ROAD SIGN FOR IT!
WITHIN SECONDS OF DRIVING THROUGH THE HEAVY GROUND MIST, SAM FOUND HIMSELF IN THE VILLAGE ITSELF
EAGER TO MAKE CONTACT WITH THE V LLAGE'S INHAB TANTS SAM WENT STRAIGHT TO THE INN
MAYBE YOU CAN HELP ME I WANT TO MAKE A FILM IN THIS VILLAGE
WHOSE PERMISSION DO I NEED? WHO RUNS THINGS?
RUN THINGS.. THE ELDERS, THEY BE HERE SOON
I'LL TALK TO MY ART DIRECTOR WHEN I GET BACK TO LONDON TONIGHT HE'LL MAKE THE ARRANGEMENTS
YOU NOT GET THERE TONIGHT, TOO FAR.. NOT SAFE GO AT NIGHT YOU
STAY HERE
STAY
HERE

FEAR SUDDENLY GRIPPED SAM AND HE FORCED HIS WAY OUT OF THE INN ONLY TO SEE.. HIS CAR ENGINE WAS TOTALLY WRECKED!
BE IT BROKE?
OF COURSE IT'S BLOODY WELL BROKE! WHO DID IT? AND WHERE'S THE NEAREST GARAGE AND PHONE?
VERMIN DONE IT REAL MONSTERS. THEY BE
GAR-AGE NO GAR-AGE NO.. PHONE.
BE SNUG AT INN STAY.. HERE..
STAY HERE
STAY. HERE
HAVING LITTLE CHOICE, SAM SOON FOUND HIMSELF IN THE INN'S GRIMY GUEST ROOM WITHIN MINUTES HE HAD A VISITOR.
LUNA COOK RABBIT STEW FOR YOU DA DA SAY YOU EAT
LUNA? LOOK, LUNA, IS THIS A PRACTICAL JOKE DREAMED UP BY MY FRIENDS AT THE STUDIO? WHY EVEN THE NAME "LOUGHVILLE" IS AN ANAGRAM OF GHOUL VILLE - THE PLACE OF GHOULS!
BUT, EVEN IF LUNA DID UNDERSTAND, SHE IGNORED THE QUEST ON
DO ALL PEOPLE ON OUTSIDE WEAR CLOTHES LIKE THIS? WE ONLY HAVE CLOTHES FROM BOXES NO CLOTHES LIKE YOURS.
OUTSIDE? BOXES? YOU MEAN YOU FOUND BOXES FILLED WITH NIGHTGOWNS AND PYJAMAS? WHERE?
BOXES IN GROUND CLOTHES, WOOD, FOOD.. ALL FROM BOXES NO MORE BOXES NOW. ALL GONE
I NOT LIKE OTHERS. I HUMGOO MOTHER WAS FROM OUTSIDE WHEN I BORN, SHE GOT INTO BOX THEN DUG UP FOR GREAT EATING... ALL HAPPY.


SOMEONE MUST COME THROUGH HERE, LUNA PEOPLE, CARS...
LONG AGO, ELDERS SET UP TRAP MOTHER AND YOU WERE CAUGHT IN IT NO-ONE LEAVE HERE EXCEPT ELDERS THEY COME SOON WITH MORE BOXES IN BIG MOTOR CAR
LUNA, LISTEN IF YOU RE NOT LIKE THEM HELP ME OUT OF HERE!
HIDE THERE IN CHURCH THEY FALL DOWN IF GO IN THERE I HUMGOO, CAN GO IN COME HELP YOU WHEN OTHERS NOT WATCH

SO SAM ONCE MORE RUSHED OUT OF THE INN AND ONCE MORE FOUND HIS WAY BARRED
BUT THIS TIME HE WOULD NOT BE STOPPED SO EASILY!

N THIN MINUTES SAM HAD FOUND HIS SANCTUARY

ONCE HE WAS CERTAIN THE CREATURES WOULD NOT ENTER SAM BEGAN TO EXPLORE THE OLD BUILDING.
AND IN THE VESTRY SAM COULD NOT SHAKE THE FEELING HE WAS NOT ALONE

AT FIRST SIGHT THE SKELETON SHOCKED HIM THEN SAM SAW THE BOOK IT GUARDED...
A DIARY AND THIS POOR SOUL MUST HAVE BEEN THE PARSON
IT WAS THEN THE WHOLE STORY UNFURLED.

SAM READ HOW THE VILLAGE HAD BEEN A SMALL PLACE WITH ONLY FIFTY FIVE INHABITANTS THE PARSON HAD FOUND A REPULSIVE CREATURE. THE VILLAGERS SAID IT WAS EVIL AND SHOULD BE KILLED..
BUT THE PREACHER TOOK IT INTO HIS HOME AND TRIED TO HELP IT
THEN ONE NIGHT THE PREACHER SAW THE THING IN THE CHURCH-YARD, FEEDING.
BUT FOR THE ONE OR TEN AWAY, TWELVE DID RETURN. THEY DANCED AROUND THE VILLAGE MAKING A BOUNDARY... A BARRIER THAT COULD NOT BE CROSSED
' AM WEAK FOR I HAVE NOT EATEN FOR MANY DAYS.. THEIR HOWLS ARE LOUDER AND HEAR SCREAMS LIGHTEN THOU MY DARKNESS, O LORD FOR I AM LOST IN THE VALLEY OF DARKNESS "
A SUDDEN NOISE DREW SAM TO THE WINDOW...
VILLAGERS CHASE ME. I NOT GO BACK [redacted] FOR HELP YOU YOU TAKE LUNA WITH YOU ?
YES, LUNA I'LL TAKE YOU WITH ME
MUST ESCAPE NOW ELDERS COME TONIGHT'
USE CROSS, IT PROTECTS
AND SO
KEEP CLOSE AND DON'T FALL BEHIND

THE TWO RUN UNTIL THEY REACH THE ROAD.
THIS WAY! ROAD ONLY LEADS BACK TO VILLAGE REAL ROAD HIDDEN BUSHES NOT REAL
SO THAT'S HOW THEY DID IT!
DISCOVERING THE BUSHES TO BE AN ILLUSION, THE TWO CROSSED THEM TO THE REAL ROAD BUT THEN THE VILLAGERS APPEARED. THOUGH THEY COULD NOT CROSS THE BARRIER, THEIR SHARP STONES COULD...
OHHH!
LUNA!
SAM GENTLY PULLED LUNA OUT OF RANGE OF THE HURLED STONES.
NO USE HURT BAD. BROKE LIKE WHEN DA DA HIT RABBIT LEAVE ME BETTER THAT WAY I NEVER BE ANYTHING BUT ANIMAL TO YOU
NO! I NEVER THOUGHT OF YOU LIKE THAT!
WITH A HAPPY SMILE, LUNA SIGHED DEEPLY . AND DIED
BUT SAM SIGHED WITH RELIEF AND DISENGAGING HIS HAND AS IF FROM SOMETHING REPULSIVE, HE HEADED FOR THE MOTORWAY
THANK HEAVENS! I NEED YOUR HELP THERE'S A VILLAGE BACK THERE.. A VILLAGE OF...
ANYWAY, TAKE ME TO THE NEAREST POLICE-STATION PLEASE
POLIC
AND SOON THE POLICE CAR WAS SPEEDING TOWARDS.
LOUGHVILLE! THIS IS THE WRONG ROAD! AND THERE'S LUNA'S BODY!
DON'T WORRY, G.R. WE SAW THE SUPPLY WAGON WILL TAKE CARE OF IT!
YOU SEE. WE ALWAYS GIVE THE ELDERS A POLICE ESCORT WHEN THEY RETURN TO LOUGHVILLE!

NOW I REALLY MUST BE GOING...
YOU CAN'T GO NOW - I'VE TAKEN A LIKING TO YOU!
(GULP!) BUT YOU PROMISED.
NO, NO I'M GOING TO PUT YOU UP FOR MEMBERSHIP!
BUT... BUT I'M NOT A MONSTER!
HE'S A A, A HUME!
THE SHOCKED SECRETARY'S VOICE HAD BEEN SO LOUD...
BUT CAN WE TRULY CALL OURSELVES A MONSTER CLUB WHEN WE DO NOT BOAST A SINGLE MEMBER OF THE HUMAN RACE?
NONSENSE
RUBBISH!
PUNY!
INSIGNIFICANT!
WHAT CAN HE DO?
WHAT CAN HE DO?
IN THE PAST SIXTY YEARS THE HUMES HAVE EXTERMINATED ONE HUNDRED AND FIFTY MILLION OF THEIR OWN KIND! NO EFFORT WAS SPARED TO REACH THIS ASTRONOMICAL FIGURE, AND THE METHODS USED MUST DEMAND OUR UNSTINTED ADMIRATION!
THEY HAVE ALSO PERFECTED A PROCESS FOR SPREADING LETHAL DISEASE TO ANY PART OF THE PLANET TO SAY NOTHING OF NUCLEAR ENERGY...
THE HUMES BEGAN WITH MANY SERIOUS DISADVANTAGES, BUT THESE THEY OVERCAME WITH WONDERFUL INGENUITY. NOT HAVING A CLAW, FANG OR EVEN A WHISTLE WORTH TALKING ABOUT, THEY INVENTED GUNS, TANKS, AEROPLANES, BOMBS, POISON GAS EXTERMINATION CAMPS, SWORDS, DAGGERS, BAYONETS, BOOBY TRAPS, ATOMIC BOMBS, FLYING MISSILES, SUBMARINES, WARSHIPS, AIRCRAFT CARRIERS AND MOTOR CARS.
DURING THEIR SHORT HISTORY THEY HAVE CONDEMNED OTHER HUMES TO DEATH BY: BURNING, HANGING, BEHEADING, ELECTROCUTION, STRANGULATION, SHOOTING... DROWNING, RACKING, CRUSHING, DISEMBOWELLING AND OTHER METHODS TOO REVOLTING TO MENTION
THE MONSTERS WERE ALL OVERCOME WITH ADMIRATION...
I NEVER REALISED YOU WERE SO TALENTED
WE DON'T LIKE TO BOAST
I SECOND THE PROPOSAL A MEMBER OF SUCH A TALENTED RACE CAN ONLY BE A CREDIT TO US!
ELECTED!
HEAR! HEAR!
AND SO, A HUMAN BEING FINALLY TOOK HIS PLACE ALONGSIDE ALL THE OTHER MONSTERS.

FATHER SHANDOR

A FLICKERING CANDLE THROWS A GHASTLY LIGHT OVER A TAINTED BOOK: **THE GRIMOIRE OF HONORIUS THE GREAT**. A MAN SITS IN SILENT CONTEMPLATION OF ITS DARK SECRETS AND EXOTIC CONJURATIONS, HIS FACE LINED AND WEARY, AGED BY THE DEVILISH NATURE OF HIS STUDIES.

BUT THIS IS NO DARK SORCERER, IT IS **FATHER SHANDOR**, A GOOD CHRISTIAN MONK, AND THE PLACE IS A TRANSYLVANIAN MONASTERY OF GREAT AGE AND SANCTITY. SHANDOR USES AN OLD MAXIM IN HIS FIGHT AGAINST EVIL = **"KNOW YOUR ENEMY"**.. AND WELL THAT HE DOES, FOR SOON HE WILL FACE THE...

SPAWN FROM HELL'S PIT!

SHANDOR PACES, LOST IN SPECULATION, UNTIL HE NOTICES...

SOMETHING **MISSING** HERE THAT'S WHERE THE **GRIMORIUM VERUM** SHOULD BE.. AH, WELL, I MUST HAVE PUT IT DOWN SOMEWHERE.

BUT LIFE IN A MONASTERY IS NOT ONLY SPENT IN LEARNED CONTEMPLATION. THERE ARE ROUTINES TO BE KEPT UP...

SERVICES TO ATTEND

AND CONVERSATIONS WITH HIS FELLOW MONKS...

.. AS YOU SAY, BUT **WAIT**, WHAT'S THAT **SMELL**? EXCEPT THAT WE DO NOT USE IT HERE, I'D SAY IT WAS **INCENSE**...

WORSE YET .. IT SMELLS LIKE **BRIMSTONE**!

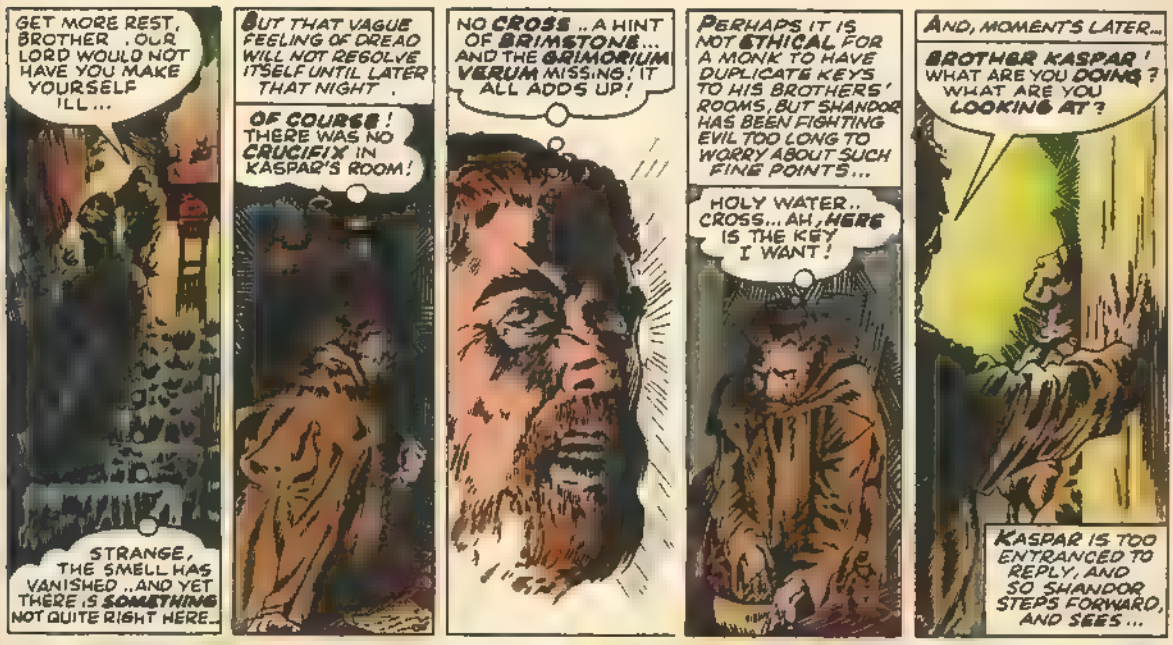
BROTHER KASPAR! OPEN UP! I WANT TO **TALK** TO YOU!

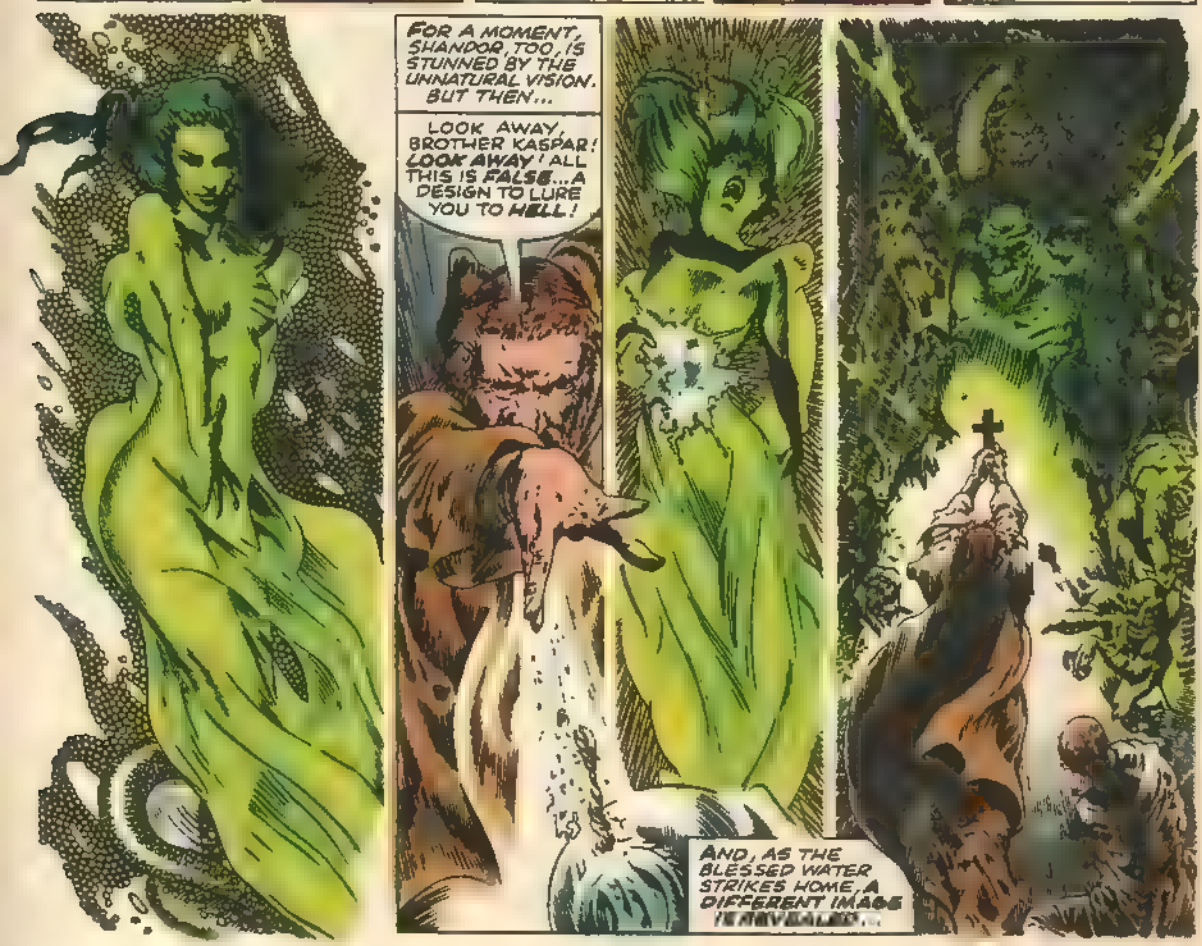
IT IS SOME TIME BEFORE THE DOOR OPENS, BUT EVENTUALLY ..

FORGIVE ME, FATHER! I HAVE BEEN MOST **REMISS** ... I FELL **ASLEEP** AT MY DEVOTIONS...

NO MATTER, BROTHER! LET US IN ..

...demon stalker


GET MORE REST, BROTHER . OUR LORD WOULD NOT HAVE YOU MAKE YOURSELF ILL...
STRANGE, THE SMELL HAS VANISHED ..AND YET THERE IS SOMETHING NOT QUITE RIGHT HERE..
BUT THAT VAGUE FEELING OF DREAD WILL NOT RESOLVE ITSELF UNTIL LATER THAT NIGHT .
OF COURSE! THERE WAS NO CRUCIFIX IN KASPAR'S ROOM!
NO CROSS .. A HINT OF BRIMSTONE... AND THE GRIMORIUM VERUM MISSING! IT ALL ADDS UP!
PERHAPS IT IS NOT ETHICAL FOR A MONK TO HAVE DUPLICATE KEYS TO HIS BROTHERS' ROOMS, BUT SHANDOR HAS BEEN FIGHTING EVIL TOO LONG TO WORRY ABOUT SUCH FINE POINTS...
HOLY WATER.. CROSS... AH, HERE IS THE KEY I WANT!
AND, MOMENTS LATER...
BROTHER KASPAR! WHAT ARE YOU DOING? WHAT ARE YOU LOOKING AT?
KASPAR IS TOO ENTRANCED TO REPLY, AND SO SHANDOR STEPS FORWARD, AND SEES...


FOR A MOMENT, SHANDOR, TOO, IS STUNNED BY THE UNNATURAL VISION. BUT THEN...
LOOK AWAY, BROTHER KASPAR! LOOK AWAY! ALL THIS IS FALSE...A DESIGN TO LURE YOU TO HELL!
AND, AS THE BLESSED WATER STRIKES HOME, A DIFFERENT IMAGE IS REVEALED...

FATHER SHANDOR

BACK, DEVIL! BACK TO THE HELL THAT SPAWNED YOU! IN NOMINE PATRIS
AND, AS THEY LEAVE THE ROOM...
MORE BRIMSTONE, AND THOSE NOISES! THE POWERS OF DARKNESS ARE ANNOYED INDEED!
SHORTLY.
I WAS WEAK, FATHER I COULDN'T TAKE THE AUSTERITY, AND I THOUGHT THAT MAGIC COULD... WELL, I KNEW YOU.
IN THE NAME OF GOD, MAN! I DON'T PRACTICE THE BLACK ARTS! I'M LEARNING TO COMBAT THEM!
GO TO THE CHAPEL AND PRAY. PRAY AS IF YOUR SOUL DEPENDED ON IT.
FOR, BELIEVE ME, IT DOES!
AND EVENTUALLY, THE ABBOT HEARS OF IT...
I NEVER APPROVED OF THE FREEDOM THE OLD ABBOT GAVE YOU, SHANDOR... AND NOW YOUR WORK HAS BROUGHT DISASTER TO US! YOU WILL DESTROY YOUR BOOKS AND CEASE THESE DABBLINGS IMMEDIATELY!
BUT ONLY IN THOSE BOOKS CAN WE FIND THE WAY OF DEALING WITH THIS THING! IF YOU WILL...
SAY NO MORE! GOD IS THE POWER WE DEPEND ON! I SHALL PERFORM AN EXORCISM IN THAT ROOM MYSELF!
IT WILL NOT WORK.
BE SILENT, SHANDOR!
AND SO, AGAINST SHANDOR'S ADVICE.
SO THIS IS THE ROOM... YOU CAN FEEL THE PRESENCE OF SATAN... IT'S ALMOST OVERPOWERING!
IN NOMINE PATRIS, IN NOMINE FIL...
GOD GIVE ME STRENGTH! IT'S TOO HORRIBLE!
AND IT IS, INDEED, TOO MUCH FOR THE ABBOT

...demon stalker

BUT THE VIOLENCE IS NOT YET SPENT ... AND THEY FLEE TO THE SOUND OF HIDEOUS LAUGHTER ECHOING UP FROM THE VERY DEPTHS OF HELL ITSELF...
THE WALLS! THEY'RE CAVING IN!
HA HA HA HA HA HA HA
AND SO, A FEW MINUTES LATER, SHANDOR IS SENT FOR...
THERE IS NO DESTROYING IT, SHANDOR, YOU WERE RIGHT! WHAT WILL IT DO? WHAT DOES IT WANT?
IT WILL SPREAD, DESTROYING THE MONASTERY AND ALL AROUND IT. THERE IS A SIMPLE WAY TO STOP IT, . GIVE IT KASPAR!
IMPOSSIBLE! YOU KNOW IT IS ..
THEN THE ONLY OTHER CHANCE IS TO LET ME STOP IT... MY WAY!
NO! I FORBID IT UTTERLY! I WILL NOT HAVE MY OWN MONKS ENGAGING IN THE BLACK ARTS!
BUT SHANDOR KNOWS NO RULES IN A SITUATION AS DESPERATE AS THIS, AND IN A BOOK SO HIDEOUS THAT IT HAS NO NAME, HE FINDS...
AH, SO THAT IS WHAT IS NEEDED! BUT THAT MEANS I SHALL HAVE TO MEET THE FIEND ON HIS OWN GROUND!
AND FROM A CUPBOARD, TREBLE-LOCKED...
THE SWORD OF ARCHIMELSUS... THE TALISMAN OF MEGISTUS...
AND THE STROKE OF MIDNIGHT FINDS SHANDOR ON THE EDGE OF HELL ITSELF!
CAN IT HAVE GROWN THIS MUCH? I'M RIGHT TO ACT NOW, BEFORE IT IS TOO LATE... BUT I MUST NOT HESITATE
AND A SINGLE STEP TAKES SHANDOR FROM THE WORLD OF MEN... INTO A WORLD OF DEMONIAC HIDEOUSNESS!
IN THAT MOMENT OF SHOCK, SHANDOR IS ALMOST LOST BUT HE MUST REACH THE HEART OF THE DEMON-CLOUD ... AND FIGHT EVERY STEP OF THE WAY..!

FATHER SHANDOR

YOU DARE MUCH, SHANDOR! BUT I TIRE OF YOUR INTRUSION..!
ANGORFARAX! I HAVE FOUND YOU AT LAST!
...SLOWLY!
TOO MANY OF MY LITTLE FRIENDS HAVE FALLEN BENEATH YOUR SWORD!
I'LL TEAR YOUR SOUL FROM YOUR LIVING BODY, SHANDOR.

BACK, HELLSPAWN! SEE, WITH THE TALISMAN OF MEGISTUS I COMMAND YOU! BACK!
CURSE YOU, SHANDOR! I SHALL HAVE VENGEANCE FOR THIS...
EVERYWHERE YOU GO, I WILL BE WATCHING ...AND ONE DAY, WHEN YOU THINK YOU ARE SAFE, I WILL HAVE YOU... BODY AND SOUL!
I SPIT ON YOUR CURSE, DEVIL! BACK TO YOUR MASTER..!
AND IN AN INSTANT, ANGORFARAX AND ALL HIS WORKS ARE GONE..!

THEN, THE WORLD RE-FORMS SLOWLY AROUND SHANDOR ... THE WORLD HE KNOWS ...
IT IS OVER ...OR IS IT? ANGORFARAX IS NOT TO BE TREATED LIGHTLY... HE WILL BE WAITING...
AND THE ABBOT IS NOT TO BE TREATED LIGHTLY EITHER...
YOU TOTALLY DISOBEYED ME, SHANDOR!
YOU'VE FOULED THE NAME OF THIS MONASTERY WITH YOUR BLACK DABBLINGS! I'M ORDERING YOU TO LEAVE ... AND I'LL PERSONALLY SEE THAT YOU RECEIVE NO OTHER POSITION IN THE CHURCH!
AND SO, THE FOLLOWING MORNING, SHANDOR LEAVES ... CURSED BY BOTH DEVIL AND CHURCH ... A WANDERER WITH NO IDEA WHAT MIGHT AWAIT HIM ... BUT KNOWING THAT HE WILL BE READY.
FIN

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